

# THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

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JOHN GRIER HIBBEN

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## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM



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BY

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**TO**  
**J. D. H.**



## PREFATORY NOTE

THE essays and addresses which I have compiled in this volume have been suggested by the present European war. The first, "Higher Patriotism," appeared in the *North American Review* of May, 1915; the second, "Preparedness and Peace," is an address which was delivered at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration in May, 1915; the third, "Might or Right," is an address which was delivered at the Laymen's Efficiency Convention, at Synod Hall of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, in October, 1914; the fourth, "Martial Valor in Times of Peace," is the Baccalaureate Sermon which was delivered in Alexander Hall to the graduating class of Princeton University, on Sunday, June 13, 1915.

J. G. H.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM . . . .	1
PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE . . . .	23
MIGHT OR RIGHT . . . . .	40
MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE	54



## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

WHEN we in America speak of the love which we entertain for our country, it is well for us to recall the various phases of changing significance through which these words—"our country"—have passed during the last one hundred and fifty years of our history. When our fathers referred in loyal devotion to "our country" they had in mind not only the colonies on our Atlantic shore, but the mother country of England as well. Loyalty was naturally British, for America then belonged to Great Britain by right of conquest and possession. But it was not possible to hold our country within the limits of this original sovereignty. Through the

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

successful struggle for independence a later generation of our fathers claimed the land bought and sealed by their blood as belonging exclusively to themselves and their children for all time. The former ideas of patriotism necessarily experienced a like revolution and were translated into terms appropriate to a new environment and a new interpretation of loyalty. The sons of the English, Scotch, and Dutch settlers and soldiers of the Revolution could proudly say: "This is *our* country." And yet, even as they said this, our nation was passing beyond their exclusive control. For suddenly men of alien races and alien tongues were sharing our birth-right with us. This was not a revolution, but an evolution, natural, inevitable. It was not only the treasures hidden beneath the soil, and the wealth of the very soil itself, which lured these strangers to our shores, but far more



## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

the spirit of liberty and the chance of a new life in a new world.

And to-day not only we of the old British stock, but also the representatives of every race and nationality the world over, have the like privilege of taking the words "our country" upon their lips with the same enthusiasm of sincere and loyal patriotic devotion. We are a composite people. The ends of the earth meet in us. Consequently, the idea of patriotism in our land cannot be racial or narrowly confined. And particularly it should not be without a sympathetic understanding of the needs of humanity. For while we are merely a part of the world, yet the whole world is in a certain sense a part of us. No corner of the earth, however remote, is without a representative somewhere among our people. The better we understand ourselves, the better shall we be able to understand the world at

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

large. Consequently, our sympathies at least must be cosmopolitan. For us, particularly, it is natural that the love of country should find its complementary expression in the love of humanity.

Madame de Staël has said that “the patriotism of nations ought to be selfish.” This must be interpreted, however, within certain limits. And it is the office of the higher patriotism to define and to transcend these limits. As no individual dare live unto himself, so also no nation dare live unto itself; it fails to fulfil its destiny if it is wholly self-centred and self-absorbed. But is it natural to love a stranger and an alien as we love our own kin and kind? Most assuredly it is, if we are discriminating as regards the sense in which we use the word “love.” The word indeed has two quite distinct meanings. There is the love which is identified with affection—that affection which

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

is bred of intimate intercourse and community of interests and desires. It is the love we cherish for the inner circle of family and friends. There is, however, another sense in which we use the term "love." It is in this sense that we are exhorted to love our neighbor as ourselves—nay, to love even our enemies. This type of love is quite another matter. It signifies a certain attitude toward all mankind, showing itself in a twofold manner in a disposition to respect every man's rights and a willingness to minister to his needs. "To do justice, to love mercy": these are the cardinal doctrines both of religion and morality, according to the old Hebrew prophet. It is easier to obey the second than the first of these commands. It is easier to respond to the appeal—especially when it comes to us at a time of calamity and wide-spread suffering—to love those in distress and

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

to give them true sympathy and substantial aid, than it is to maintain both the spirit and the letter of justice in our dealings with those who are not in distress and who neither ask nor need help of us. Nevertheless, the love of our fellow men is only a name, and therefore a mockery, unless it recognizes and respects the law of just and fair dealing not only between man and man, but between nation and nation as well. It is of little avail to show mercy to those from whom we have withheld justice. Compensation for injury does not absolve us from the guilt of inflicting the injury. Love for the peoples of other lands, beyond our borders, with whom we may be brought into more or less intimate relations means, primarily and essentially, a disposition to deal fairly with the alien nation irrespective of the circumstance as to whether that nation is weaker or stronger than ours.

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

We need to-day particularly clear thinking and strong conviction, upon this fundamental principle of conduct. This truth requires no explanation. It does not wait upon proof. It needs only to be emphasized and driven home, so that it may become not only a matter of individual appropriation, but also a part of patriotic tradition. This is the time to reassert our political convictions as regards the relations of our country to all peoples of the earth. We should recognize the moral foundations upon which a nation must rest if its stability is to remain secure.

Where do we find the clearest expression of the moral worth and moral grandeur of this idea of justice both individual and national? Where do we find the most profound recognition of the sovereign nature of the law of justice? Without question, in Germany. It is not von Treitschke, nor Nietzsche,

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

nor Bernhardi, who speaks for Germany or who represents the German tradition. They may represent the spirit of their age, but it is an age that is passing. It is Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher and prophet, who expresses Germany's most profound thought in words which have an eternal significance. I call him a prophet because he speaks for his people, and indeed for other peoples also and for all times; his is a universal language. His philosophy is rigorous, uncompromising in its insistence upon a profound reverence for the law of justice and an obedient surrender to its commands. And this law finds expression with him in two fundamental moral maxims. First, always act as you would wish to if that action were to become a universal law. Second, always treat man as an end in himself, and never merely as a means to an end. That is, our individual conduct

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

must be judged by a standard which admits of universal application. Our convenience, or necessity, or desire, or indeed any particular consideration whatsoever, cannot be weighed against the universal demands of the law of right. Moral law admits of no particular interpretation. What is right for one is right for all. What is duty for one is duty for all.

The second maxim insists upon the supreme consideration which is due the rights of human personality. Man as such is to be regarded as an end in himself. He is not a thing, but a person, and to treat him as a person is the first law of all human relationship. Kant, moreover, believed that these doctrines were applicable to nations as well as to individuals. He dreamed his dream of all the nations of the earth living together in a federation of mutual respect and friendly co-operation, a dream of

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

universal peace. One day it may be realized. Whatever his dream may be, his teaching as to individual and national duty is clear, and with the voice of a prophet he spoke to the German people nearly a century and a half ago, and he is speaking to Germany again to-day, and, indeed, to all nations of the earth, for his message is not for any particular land or any particular time, but for every age and every people. And we do well to give heed to his message. There is always danger of injustice through a false idea of patriotism. It is a fundamental moral fallacy that any act whatsoever, done as a supposed service to one's country, is thereby self-justified. We dare not disregard the rights of others for the sake of a nation's glory. The strong nation dare not exploit the weaker for its own advantage either in war or in peace. A nation, as an individual, has a personality which must be respected. This marks



## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

the limit of national self-assertion and self-aggrandizement. Necessity is no excuse for injustice. The plea of necessity seeks to particularize the universal law of right. Kant's voice is raised in protest against such procedure. The German tradition of moral integrity and honor is against it. As Kant has insisted, there is only one necessity in the whole world, and that is the necessity of obeying the law of right. Germany of the past appeals to Germany of the present in words which have been so often heard in the philosophical discussions of the last century—"Back to Kant." They apply as well to the superficial political philosophy of the day. I profoundly believe that the most significant result of the present European conflict will be to establish one and the same ethical standard alike for nations as for individuals, so that national pledges will be jealously guarded from reproach

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

and shame. The common sense and the common conscience of the people will demand this.

The world has been very slow in recognizing the moral responsibility of a nation. Indeed, in the evolution of our ethical concepts there are three distinct stages which mark the progress of humanity toward a more adequate realization of the fundamental principles of morality. The first is the stage of individual self-realization in which the chief concern of life seems to centre in maintaining the existence of the individual and promoting his self-seeking desires. The second stage marks the awakening of the social conscience, where one comes to recognize his duties to his fellows and the obligation which he is under to preserve their lives and to promote their welfare as well as his own. In the third stage there is the recognition not merely of the obligation which

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

the individual owes to others, but also the obligation which the social group itself, whether the clan or the tribe or the nation, owes to other social groups with which it comes in contact. This third stage is in the process of realization. It has not as yet been fully attained. We are developing, however, toward a clearer apprehension of our interracial and international obligations. Much still remains to be thought, to be felt, and to be done. We as a nation have established a tradition of fair dealing with other nations. It must not only be maintained in the same spirit as that which characterizes our relations with Cuba, or with China—as in the return to that country of our indemnity fund—but we must also endeavor to discern our responsibility and to interpret it in the light of the larger events and the greater needs of the world.

It is perhaps not necessary to urge

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

the necessity of expressing an active sympathy and assistance as regards those who at present are overwhelmed by the disaster of the European war. To help at such a time as this is not merely a duty—it is an instinct. And our country has responded to the call which has come across the sea in a manner so prompt, so generous, so altogether admirable, as clearly to reveal the great heart of the Western world. The need of suffering humanity is to-day bringing America and Europe nearer together. Not only has our heart been touched, but our imagination has been so stimulated that we do not find it difficult to recognize the foreigner as our brother. In a very vivid sense we are conscious that we too are carrying the burden of the world's misery. There is certainly no room for national complacency, no occasion for national congratulation, because we are free from the great war's

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

toll of life and of possessions. We too feel constrained to go down into the valley of the shadow of death with our brother; for the shadow which has fallen upon the Old World is upon the New also.

After this war is concluded and the day of peace begins to dawn there must immediately follow a period of reconstruction—not only a reconstruction of material resources, but also a reorganization of the fundamental ideas and purposes of life. Our part must necessarily be a large one, for we must lend our strength to the nations weakened by the ravages of war. We can no longer claim that we are freed from the complications of Old World affairs, and from all responsibility concerning them, because of our isolation. The separation of the two continents is not wholly measured by space, but by time as well, and time has been so enor-

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

mously decreased, and communication has been made such an immediate affair, that we can no longer feel that we in America live in a world of our own. We are passing through times in which the spirit and temper of great peoples are being tried as by fire, and we must appreciate the fact that as a nation we must do our part in the great endeavor to save the soul of the world and establish the things which remain. In Europe the continuity of civilization for the time being has been interrupted. Industry, commerce, art, science, literature, education, international intercourse, have been checked or have ceased altogether. The flower of young manhood, the hope and the promise of the coming generation, have been sacrificed. Light has given place to darkness, life to death. Much that has been gained in centuries of progress has been irreparably lost. All the forces of civiliza-

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

tion which make for peace and prosperity and the joy of life continue, however, here in America unbroken and undiminished.

We hold in our hands the threads of the past and of the future; not one of them is broken. There is therefore a peculiar obligation resting upon us to conserve these treasures of human creation which make for peace and the welfare of mankind. After these days of desolation have passed there is need of a new heaven and a new earth. The world must become better; and it is our privilege as well as our duty to put forth every effort to make it better. Therefore, in this period of anxiety and uncertainty it would be well for us consciously and seriously to consider how we may better prepare ourselves for the task which will surely devolve upon us: the labor of building anew the world.

There is certainly need at this time of transition that we should establish a new

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

scale of values in our estimate of life. We have become, during the past generation particularly, too prone to estimate the reality of all values in terms of that which we can weigh or measure or count. But material standards are not sufficient to express those values which possess supreme worth. Even in the handling of material things in the midst of a world of practical business affairs we must set for ourselves some standard which in itself is not material. In the throes of its new birth the world to-day needs a new industrial conscience, a new sense of social responsibility, a new standard of national integrity. We must realize that the strength of a nation lies ultimately not in its natural resources, or in its methods of efficiency, or in its numerical superiority, or in its army or navy, but in its moral and spiritual vigor. All of us are one in our desire to have peace, peace universal and permanent which



## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

will dominate the world, but it is impossible to command peace or to seek peace as such directly. We can secure peace only by striving to realize in our lives the things which make for peace. It is not a matter of resolution, but of consecration. If we seek righteousness and cause it to prevail in the world, peace will inevitably follow.

It is no light task; and that we may be prepared for the opportunity when it comes we must be willing to submit ourselves to the discipline of self-restraint. We must learn to endure hardness and to simplify our mode of living. It is not merely that we as a people have enjoyed too much ease and too great luxury, but we have sacrificed too much for this luxury and this ease. We need the strength that is born of self-denial. We should be ashamed to waste our time and energy in profitless pursuits while our brothers are agonizing in this death-

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

struggle of the nations; ashamed also to waste our money or indulge ourselves in unnecessary expenditure while our brothers are starving and destitute. In spite of the noise of battle, a sacred stillness has fallen upon the world which we even in our pleasures must both recognize and respect. It is necessary also to appreciate that the work before the coming generation is to be in a new day, a day of larger opportunity, of more exacting demands, of heavier burdens. Only the strong man will be adequate to the task. If he is to be ready when the call comes, there must be a fine tempering of his soul. It is a matter not only of efficiency or of skill, but of the living sources of power.

It may be urged that the duty to which I am referring is exceedingly indefinite. That may be true, because the highest order of duty is always indefinite. The supreme responsibility which rests upon us all is that of discovering

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

for ourselves the duty which marks the line of greatest possible service. I believe that the will to serve will always find the way.

The coming generation, which is to make new history for the new world, may well pledge "The Day" with all eagerness and enthusiasm—that day when they will be called upon to realize the sublime idea of patriotic devotion, the nation for the world's service. It is true of nations as of individuals that the greatest must become servant of all. A man will serve his country according to the degree and extent of the idea which he has conceived of his country's mission and destiny in ministering to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs of the world at large. The greatest achievements of the greatest nations have been their international contributions to the treasures of human thought and human feeling irrespective of race traditions or national frontiers. Greece,

## THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM

Rome, Italy, France, England, Germany, are great not by might nor by power, but by virtue of their philosophy, their art, their law, their religion, their science, and their literature; by all the discoveries and inventions of the mind of man which have increased the dimensions of human life in its length and breadth and depth. What they have done exclusively for themselves passes away; what they have done for the world remains. For a nation to place all peoples of all lands under a debt of conscious obligation because of her service to humanity, to send forth light from her high places to illumine the earth, to realize within herself that righteousness which exalteth a nation, to champion the cause of justice, and to sacrifice the glory of conquest for the reign of universal peace—this is indeed to conquer the world. And happy are they who have a part in it.

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

THE proposition which should meet with the thoughtful and tolerant consideration of every American citizen is this, that the policy of a wise preparedness of our military forces in the United States is not incompatible with the great peace movement which this gathering represents. I do not advocate preparedness for war, but a preparedness against war—a preparedness which in the event of the catastrophe of war itself will prevent the enormous initial sacrifice of human lives which has characterized every war in which the United States have been engaged throughout our past history.

It is to me a matter of serious concern that even the most extreme advo-

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

cates of non-resistance at the particular time of this great world crisis should welcome the support and co-operation of those who may differ with them on the subject of national preparedness, but who are quite as eager and enthusiastic to proclaim and maintain the cause of universal peace. I deplore the lack of tolerance on the part of certain pacifists in their obvious scorn of those who would temper zeal with wisdom in the effort to prepare against the possibility of war, while at the same time putting forth every effort to secure the blessings of a permanent peace. No cause is ever promoted by a spirit of Pharisaism, and I for one object to being regarded as viewing the subject from a less elevated moral plane because I believe that the policy of preparedness is a matter of pressing national duty. In this great world campaign to establish that universal moral order which is the sole guarantee of

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

peace, no one should repudiate the convictions and efforts of those who with heart and soul seek the same end as himself.

There is no virtue in providing an inadequate defense of our land. There are only two logical positions to take in reference to this question. One is that a country such as ours should completely disarm and offer no defense whatsoever to any foe, or, on the other hand, that it should plan wisely and systematically an adequate defense. I assume that there is no one at the present time so ignorant of the spirit of the American people that he would not be willing to admit the truth of the following proposition, namely—that if our country is drawn into any war, although against our will and against our desire, we will nevertheless fight to the finish for our national honor and integrity. It would be entirely futile even to discuss the

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

question as to the advisability of our country at the present time or in the near future wiping out its army and navy and pursuing the policy of absolute non-resistance. Therefore, if we have an army and navy which no doubt would be used in the time of a national emergency, what conceivable idea of moral obligation do we violate in insisting that the forces of such an army and navy should be efficient instead of inefficient, should be adequate instead of inadequate? No one, moreover, can deny that our present military equipment, particularly our army, has certain defects which it would seem to be a wise policy to remedy at once. It is well known that we have only 90,000 widely scattered mobile troops available for defense, of which 60,000 are militia, and it would take thirty days after any enemy landed on our shores to concentrate the forces of the militia. Behind this army we



## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

have no reserves to speak of, and a deplorable shortage of men and guns in our regular field-artillery. We possess less than half of the needed military field-batteries, and it would require three months' training to make those which we have of any avail against the forces of an enemy. In the army reports it is stated that it would be a year and a half after any foreign enemy landed on our shores before we could provide adequate field-artillery, ammunition trains, and ammunition.

In view of these facts, the dictates of common sense certainly would suggest that we should prepare reasonably for an emergency which it might be necessary for us to meet by armed resistance. The only valid excuse, however, for failing to prepare adequately for such a possible emergency is the conviction that it would be wrong for us as a nation to take up arms in any event whatso-

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

ever. No one can be so blind regarding the significance of present conditions as to take the position that a grave national emergency is not at least a possibility. I am aware of the fact that there are many who would urge that there is no such thing as preparedness against war, but insist that the military preparedness of a nation gives occasion for war by provoking an aggressive military spirit. I do not believe this. Preparedness does not necessarily mean a nation in arms or a nation inflamed by the false dreams of a militaristic destiny. This is conspicuously illustrated in the case of Switzerland. They are naturally a peace-loving people. They also love liberty, and therefore have prepared themselves to defend their liberty against the world. They love peace, and therefore are prepared to fight that war may not cross their borders. They are in no sense a military nation and

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

I believe that the establishment of a citizen reserve force such as that of Switzerland in no sense leads to militarism.

What is militarism? It is the madness of a nation. Militarism is not created by the army, but the nature and scope of the army is determined by the policy of militarism. Militarism is a theory of state. Where militarism exists the government is a part of the army, instead of the army being a part of the government. With militarism the idea of war dominates even the pursuits of peace; and war becomes a public policy for the expansion of the country's territory and the development of its resources. Militarism is the internal control of the whole machinery of government in times of peace as well as in times of war. It means a military caste and all the pomp and circumstance of insolent power which thinks imperially

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

and prosecutes the policies of an aggressive world domination. Its ethic is the maxim that the end justifies the means; its religion is the idea of a tribal God of battles whose favor is propitiated by the blood of its sons sacrificed on the high altar of national glory and fame; its inspiration, the love of conquest, the greed of power, and the passion of hate. I insist that all of the traditions of our country are fundamentally opposed to this conception of government and of national destiny. Every conviction and every sentiment of our past challenges the mere suggestion of this state of affairs. Preparedness for defense on our part can never degenerate into military display and military insolence, so long as our people remain loyal to those ideas which throughout our history have fashioned and directed our national policy. Militarism and the love of war for war's sake are due to

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

a perverted vision and a false idea of patriotism, and democratic America is naturally hostile to any suggestion of the autocratic military domination of our government and of our institutions.

It is not sufficient in this day merely to cry, Peace! Peace! We must face the undeniable reality of things as they are and endeavor to think clearly and act sanely concerning the actual conditions both present and future of our national life. We cannot command peace merely by raising our voices and summoning it to be and to prevail. Peace is not a matter merely of engrossed resolutions or of fervent sentimental appeal. The lack of preparedness to meet any great national emergency which may prove a national calamity does not in itself create peace. It may only serve to intensify and prolong the horrors of war. We secure peace not by seeking it directly

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

or by invoking it, but by the endeavor to create and maintain those influences which make for peace.

I am not in sympathy with the peace propaganda which is being prosecuted in many of our schools, so far at least as it endeavors to quicken the peace sentiment by impressing upon the minds of the young children the horrors or the economical losses of war. Such an appeal never makes any profound or permanent impression upon young minds. It is purely utilitarian and there is something about youth which is impatient with the balancing of the profit-and-loss elements in any adventure of life. In my experience in dealing with young men through more than a quarter of a century I know that there is only one kind of appeal which ever reaches their conviction and commands their resolution—it is the appeal to their moral sense of right, of justice, of fair play,

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

and of decent dealing, man with man, in all the relations of life.

In an effort to inaugurate an era of universal peace, we must begin by the endeavor to promote the universal recognition of the fundamental distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil. It should be the aim of the instruction in every school and college in the country "to make certain things impossible, and to make action against them instinctive, with an instinct, like a trained habit, that is above reason." Let us teach our youth that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is a reproach to any people; that there is one law of righteousness for the nation and for the individual, that the obligation to recognize and respect treaty rights is as binding upon a people as contract obligations are binding upon individuals, that the claims of the weaker individual for just and even merciful

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

considerations have no greater validity than those of a weaker nation; that there should be in the mind of every American youth the complete elimination of race prejudice, and in its stead the fostering of an enlarged sympathy with every child of humanity on the face of the whole earth; and withal an ever-expanding conception of the being and nature of God, that he is the God not of our country alone, or of any race or any tribe, but the Lord of the world, and that no people are of such superior breed as to claim the monopoly of God. This is the true propaganda of peace! Let our rising generation be invigorated by these elemental principles of individual, national, and international righteousness and then we may hope to hail the dawn of the day of peace. The nations of the world will be prepared for international arbitration as soon as they have been schooled in realizing the



## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

significance of international obligation. It is reverence for law which begets the spirit of peace.

There are two fallacies whose operation in the minds of men tends to obstruct the progress of peace. I do not know whether to characterize them as fallacies of reason, or fallacies of inclination. The one comes to us out of the past, the other is the product of this present European war. The first concerns the idea of national sovereignty. It is expressed in the words: "There is no law above the state." No more damnable doctrine was ever uttered. It is the root of all militarism. This conception of the prerogative of the state is the greatest obstacle to-day to the consummation of the reign of universal peace. Above every sovereign state there are the immutable laws of righteousness and the eternal decrees of God. It will be of little avail for us to depict the

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

horrors of war and the blessings of peace unless we can instruct and inspire the youth of our land to

“Believe truth and justice draw  
From founts of everlasting law.”

The second fallacy is that this present terrible war has developed certain practises and usages which will revolutionize the accepted restrictions of international law so that hereafter all immemorial obligations of nation to nation in a state of war will be swept away. I am willing to admit that after the closing act of this great world tragedy there will emerge a new international law, but I will not allow for a moment that the nations of the earth are capable of returning to a barbarous code of international relations. On the contrary, I am persuaded that international ethics will be placed on a higher and more secure plane than ever before.

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

It is the weakest kind of sentimentalism gone mad to imagine that the cause of peace is in the remotest degree advanced by teaching the children of the public schools to sing the doggerel rhyme beginning with the line: "I did not raise my boy to be a soldier." What does any parent know as to the destiny of his child? How can he possibly say that he did not raise his son for any purpose whatsoever? If he has reared him in the spirit of service and has inspired within him a passion for duty, it is certain that his child can never escape some service of honor and indeed may be nobly doomed to a life of sacrifice and the death of a hero. Two Princeton graduates went as medical missionaries to China years ago and were murdered in the Boxer uprising. Their parents might well have said, they did not raise their sons to die this horrible death. It might be said quite as

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

well by the parents of another Princeton graduate, Doctor Ethan Butler, who is fighting the typhus fever in Serbia, that they did not raise their son for this desperate adventure of service; or by the parents of Doctor Donnelly and Doctor Magruder, who have recently died at their post of duty in that same country and at the same work, that they did not raise their sons to be the victims of pestilential disease. All, however, have reared their sons to recognize the compelling truth that the call of duty is man's sovereign command.

This is not a question of mere academic interest which we are discussing. We as a nation are looking into a future that is dark and mysterious. In the high tension of international hate and international suspicion the most insignificant accident may chance to precipitate for us a national catastrophe. And in the great emergency, if it should come,

## PREPAREDNESS AND PEACE

what shall we say?—Peace! Peace at any price! By all means, let us pay any price which can *buy* peace—restraint of passion, long-sufferance, sacrifice of material wealth or of every personal convenience and comfort. Let us sacrifice it all, everything which can *buy* peace. But let us not forget that there are some things which cannot *buy* peace. If we sacrifice them in order to secure peace, the peace thus sought and dearly bought becomes for us the veriest torment of a living hell. We dare not trade honor for peace, we dare not betray duty in order that we may bargain for peace. We dare not indulge ourselves in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, while we turn deaf ears to the cry of distress, or to the summons of a righteous cause.

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

WE are all of us sadly conscious of our failure to realize in any adequate measure the standards of right conduct which we set for ourselves. Attainment falls far short of purpose and desire. Through want of courage, or it may be of inclination, or of sheer inertia, we fail to obey perfectly the law of duty which we recognize as imperatively binding upon us. There is, however, a more subtle kind of failure as regards our moral endeavor and achievement which is due to the unconscious shifting of these standards of right and wrong themselves. It is not merely that we fail to do that which we know to be right, but at times the very idea of right itself is strangely altered. The good insensibly assimilates to itself certain elements of

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

evil which we allow and accept without full realization of the significance of this moral alchemy to which the most fundamental of our ideas are oftentimes subjected. The idea of right no longer stands in its integrity, but is compromised and even neutralized by conflicting thoughts and sentiments. The things which at one time held first place in our estimate of life become secondary. Our attitude toward men, and manners, and affairs, experiences a radical change. This in most cases takes place unconsciously, or, if conscious of it, we refrain from confessing it even to ourselves.

There are some, however, who are both frank enough and bold enough to announce their belief in the radical doctrine which demands a complete transformation of essential values. For them, good is evil and evil good, and they seem not ashamed to avow it. The conspicuous German philosopher of later

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

years, Nietzsche, with a naïve simplicity, insists that the great need of our modern civilization is that which he designates as "the transvaluation of all values." By this he means the complete transformation of certain ideas of supreme value into their direct opposites. He declares, for instance, that the central virtues of Christianity such as those of self-sacrifice, pity, mercy, indicate an inherent weakness of the human race, and that the strong man dissipates his energies through the offices of kindness and helpfulness. Thus the law which commands us to bear one another's burdens must be regarded as obsolete. Every man should be strong enough to bear his own burdens. If not, he is a drag to the onward progress of humanity, and to assist him is to do evil and not good. If you help the weak, you so far forth assist in perpetuating an inferior type of manhood.



## MIGHT OR RIGHT

From this point of view the definition of religion given in the Old Testament should be revised—"Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." In doing justice we must first be just to self; in loving mercy it must not be at the expense of our own interests and advantage; and we must not walk so humbly before our God as to give to the world the appearance of weakness or lack of independence. As Nietzsche insists: "The man who loves his neighbor as himself must have an exceedingly poor opinion of himself." If the race is to be perfected, everything and every person must be sacrificed in order to produce and preserve the strong man at all hazards. There is a kind of "moralic acid," as Nietzsche styles it, which is corroding the strength of humanity in our modern day. We have discoursed too much of character, too little of power; too much of self-

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

sacrifice, too little of self-assertion; too much of right, too little of might. Conscience not only interferes with success but also prevents the evolution of a superior type of man, that superman who is not constrained by duty nor limited by law, living his life, "beyond good and evil."

The serious question which presents itself to our minds at this time is whether our modern world has not been unconsciously incorporating these ideas into its living beliefs—that is, those beliefs which reveal themselves in actual living and doing, in daily purpose, in the adaptation of means to ends, in the deeds which the world honors, and in the achievements which it crowns with glory. There are many persons who would not have the frankness of Nietzsche to say that might makes right, and that a moral sense is the great obstacle to progress, and that "vigorous eras, noble

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

civilizations, see something contemptible in sympathy, in brotherly love, in the lack of self-assertion and self-reliance." Our modern world may not explicitly subscribe to such doctrines in their extreme and exaggerated expression, but nevertheless may be unconsciously influenced by them. Our real opinions, however, are to be tested by our sense of values as revealed by the things which we crave, which we set our hearts upon, which we strive early and late to gain, and sacrifice all else in order to secure. Have we not offered our prayers to the God of might rather than the God of righteousness; to the God of power rather than the God of justice, the God of mercy and of love?

The time has come, in my opinion, for us to take account of the things which we really believe and of the God whom we really worship. If we have been following false gods, let us hon-

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

estly endeavor to re-establish fundamental and essential values, to discover anew what is of supreme worth, and set our faces resolutely toward its realization. The need of our modern world to-day is the same as that of the ancient world at the time of the coming of Christ. His message to the world, as indicated by his teaching and his life, was an arraignment of the ancient regime as regards three crucial points.

First, the religious and moral beliefs of that age had become purely formal. There was the letter of conviction, but not the spirit of it. The creed, the ritual, the ceremony were there, but the life had departed. And so to-day our beliefs have lost vitality to a large extent because we have been content to indulge in formulas oft repeated, which have ceased to have significance for our thoughts or for our feelings. We have allowed ourselves to be betrayed by

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

words which are mere sounds without substance. We have verbalized our beliefs, and have depotentiated them of vital significance. Take, for instance, the phrases, "the fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of man." They have been so often upon our lips as to become trite; their real meaning has disappeared. It is easy to repeat the words, and to be satisfied with the repetition, and nevertheless remain wholly insensible to their profound import and under no compulsion whatsoever to obey their sublime command. We assent to the formula; but it does not become a determining factor in our purposes and plans. There is perhaps no age in the history of the world which has so emphasized the idea of the brotherhood of man as our own; and never in all history has there been such a denial of this idea as by the present European war. If the brotherhood of man had been the

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

living, dominant idea of our civilization, could this present tragedy of the nations have occurred? If the world had believed profoundly in the idea of God, would we now be daily reading of the ghastly scenes where human life is no longer sacred, where love gives place to hate, where the constructive forces of the world are superseded by the destructive, and all the passions of man's brute inheritance are given full play and scope?

Second, in the teachings of Christ there was a remarkable expansion of the idea of God. Instead of the tribal God worshipped as the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, he substituted the idea of God as the Father of all peoples and all races, the God of the Jew and Gentile, of the Greek and barbarian, of the bond and the free. It was the great apostle of the Gentiles who, at the centre of Greek civilization,

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

announced this fundamental conception of Christianity to the old world: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

This was the sublime idea of the God of a united humanity. The God of the tribe had given place to the God of the whole world. That conception was very foreign to the popular religious notions current at the time of Christ, and it seems still farther away from our ideas of the present day. It is a very narrow and circumscribed view of God to regard him as concerned merely for our little insular affairs, to regard him simply as a God of the individual or of the home, or even one's nation. He transcends all these limitations of particular interests and particular needs. He is not merely our God but the God of all mankind. The children of Israel called him the God of battle, the Lord

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

of hosts—that is, the one who, like the gods of Homer, would give victory to them in their battles and who would prove the personal leader of their hosts. But Christ came to the world in God's name to universalize this narrow tribal idea of God, proclaiming peace on earth and good will to men. It was the dawn of a new era, the Christian era. That light which shone upon the old world is darkened by the cloud hanging low over Europe at the present time. We cannot think, however, that it is permanently extinguished. To that light the nations of the earth must again return.

Third, Christ gave to the world of his day an enlarged idea of the area of moral obligation. He insisted most stoutly upon the expansion of the scope of individual responsibility. This freeing of the idea of duty from the limitations of race prejudice is a natural



## MIGHT OR RIGHT

corollary to the idea of the universality of God's relation to the world. Corresponding to the tribal view of God there is always an accompanying idea of the restricted obligation of the individual. To care for one's own family or one's own clan or tribe and present a hostile front to the rest of mankind has always been the characteristic feature of primitive morality. It was peculiarly the teaching of Christ which brought to the world the idea that the area of moral obligation is co-extensive with the world itself. There are no racial or national lines which can limit the extent of our responsibility. The world to-day needs to learn this lesson anew, and it is evident that it must acquire this knowledge through bitter and desperate experiences. The natural tendency of human nature is to particularize our relations to God and bound our relations to our fellow men; to narrow our rela-

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

tions to God so as to embrace only our direst needs, and to circumscribe our relations to man so as to include in the field of responsibility only those who are our kin or our own kind. The time has certainly come for us to take larger views of the world, of man, and of God. There is a great moral and spiritual enterprise in which the young men of our land may play a large and significant part. We look to them to express strong and decided opinions in the face of a great world crisis and to lead others toward the goal of a regenerated humanity. To know the right and to maintain it, to fight against the wrong, to impart courage to the timid, strength to the weak, and hope to the faint-hearted, to forget self in the service of others, and extend a human sympathy to the ends of the earth—this is the great vocation. It is the call of the world, it is the voice of one calling out of a distant past

## MIGHT OR RIGHT

across the nineteen Christian centuries; it is the “spirit of the years to come” summoning men to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth.

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:

And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.

And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.—II Sam. 10 : 9-12.

THE scene which these words picture is a characteristic description of the spirit which is provoked by war among a people who believe they are fighting

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

for a righteous cause—the choice men of the nation called to take their stand at the place of greatest danger, united by the common bond of mutual co-operation and helpfulness, fired by the spirit of courage and manly endeavor, and experiencing withal a quickening of religious zeal and enthusiasm. It would be a pity, a very tragedy indeed, if the youth of Europe should attain this new view of life through their present desperate conflict, and here, in this land of peace far from the horror and disaster of war, our young men should fail of such a vision, and a new birth of moral and spiritual power. There are some who have formulated for themselves a philosophy of national destiny which maintains that war is a dire necessity in order to regenerate and reinvigorate a people fast approaching a decadent state due to the deteriorating forces of material greed and the emasculating influ-

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

ence of luxurious ease and self-indulgence. From such a point of view war is the great national prophylactic. It is insisted that war arrests national disease and decay, revives the national conscience, unifies a people, and gives a new meaning to the spirit of loyalty and sacrifice; that it is only by the baptism of fire and blood that the regeneration of a nation can be accomplished. Thus a new national consecration is born of national peril and is maintained even through national defeat.

Is this the only way to realize the true end of a people's destiny? Must we confess that it is necessary for us first to descend into hell before we can begin to climb the steep ascent of heaven? Who can answer this question? I cannot. We of an older generation cannot answer it. The answer is with you of the coming generation, you who are to play your part in the new day of

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

your labors in the world awaiting you. I am profoundly convinced that it is possible for you to prove in your own lives that martial valor may be illustrated in times of peace as well as in war.

Let us not deceive ourselves that peace is in itself a blessing. We can make it a blessing; but we can make it a curse as well. The old Hebrew prophet, you remember, declared the curse of Moab in the words: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him and his scent is not changed." Moab failed to withstand the test of peace and prosperity; therefore was compelled to suffer accordingly.

What is peace? Peace is a situation, an external setting, the guarantee of a free

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

exercise of all our powers, without fear of the menace or intrusion of a foreign foe to challenge or control that freedom. How will man use his freedom thus guaranteed by peace? How will a nation realize the rightful fruits of liberty where its own sovereign purposes know neither let nor hindrance? We often speak of a peaceful scene in nature. Man enters, and the place of peace may become the setting for murder or a retreat for prayer. Peace is the clean sheet upon which man may write the record for good or ill; it is the opportunity which man may nobly use or shamefully abuse; it is the unknown quantity to which the human factor alone can give determinate value. Who, then, will lead the way in the realization of the true possibilities of peace? Who will prove that the spirit of peace may become the spirit of valor, and assure the solidarity and progress of our nation? Who but the choice men of our



## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

land—the men of exceptional privilege, who by a process of natural selection have passed from one degree of excellence to another in the arduous discipline of mind and character through years of preparation for a life of service?

When facing the peril of war, it is this type of man who has always responded most readily and most promptly to his country's call to arms. In the crisis of peace, a crisis fraught with the untold possibility of good or evil, the need of such initiative and such example is none the less imperative. The choice men for the position of difficulty and of danger—this is the natural necessity and programme of war. Peculiar ability creates peculiar obligation. It is the toll which life exacts of excellence of any kind whatsoever. Peace as well as war calls for the self-sacrificing activities of superior men. But it may be urged that peace has no particular danger, no

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

particular difficulty, such as war presents. The danger and difficulty are not the same—that I admit. But peace has its difficulties and dangers quite as real. They are not so evident, however. They are indirect, invisible, subtle, infinitely complicated and far-reaching in their effects. The danger which is imminent and immediate we brace ourselves to meet because we must. The danger which is remote and problematical it is natural to ignore.

We fail, moreover, to reckon with those dangers which may not affect our own day and generation. There is a certain crude and cruel selfishness attaching to each living generation which induces a singular disregard of the generation to come. So long as we do not reap the harvest of our sowing, let those who are to follow, we say, meet their own dangers and perils as best they may. If this is not a conscious utterance in defense of

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

present-day neglect of social and national obligations, it is at least the unconscious working hypothesis of many who would enjoy the comfort and convenience of the day of peace, while wholly oblivious to that sense of duty which the true appreciation of such privileges naturally creates.

The first recognition of the duty arising from the peace and the liberty which our republic provides comes with the realization that we are not a mass of many millions of separate individuals, each with his own particular interests to maintain and preserve, but that we are one people, enlisted in the service of a common cause. This idea of a common cause which is the inspiration of all the heroic deeds of self-sacrifice in the time of war, we must endeavor in some way to make potent in the activities and pursuits of our people in the time of peace. All soldiers are com-

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

rades in arms. Can we not also recognize the bonds of comradeship in the common work of the world, in our common lot and our common destiny as brother men? Is it not possible to feel the thrill of comradeship in our common fight against the forces of ignorance, of evil, of vice, of intemperance, of injustice, of disease and premature death? To save his comrade from death when under fire the true soldier will run every risk of personal danger and hold his own life cheap in his all-absorbing work of rescue. Amidst the perils of peace you too will hear the call for help from many a comrade against whom the tide of circumstance is running hard.

In the early career of David there gathered about him a band of soldiers at the cave of Adullam, desperate men, "every one that was in distress, every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented."

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

War has a peculiar fascination for men of this type, men who have had a chance in life and have failed to realize its possibilities, men whose adverse condition from birth has seemed to deny them every chance, men also who have lacked the resolution to make a chance for themselves in spite of untoward conditions. Conscious of the galling burden of a useless life, they hail the opportunity of war, that at last they may prove themselves of some service in the defense of the common cause of their country. Such lives may be made valuable in times of peace also if they can be saved from becoming a part of the wreckage of a nation. You will find them in the communities of which you are to become active citizens and where you are to play your part in the work of the world. You cannot escape them. They will be at your very doors. They need some one to think for them, to

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

plan for them, and to rally their broken spirits to engage in some enterprise which will provide them scope in a united effort to realize a higher and better order of life. There is no village or city in this land in which there is not some potential power for good of this kind, power however inoperative, power gone to waste, or, as so often happens, power which is basely misdirected in the courses of evil. To make this power actual and to direct it toward useful ends requires thought, sympathy, and patience, and above all the overpowering sense of the common bond which unites all men of all classes in a common lot and destiny.

It would be well for us to recognize and confess that the great obstacle to the progress of our people in the development of national vigor and rectitude is the growth of a selfish individualism which has no thought for the common good and the public weal. In a letter

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

recently written by a young British officer to his mother a few days before he was killed in action, there were found these words:

Units, individuals, cannot count. We live our little lives and die. To some are given chances of proving themselves men, and to others no chance comes. Whatever our individual faults, virtues, or qualities may be, it matters not; for, when we are up against big things, let us forget individuals and let us act as one great unit, united and fearless. Some will live and many will die, but count the loss not. It is better far to go out with honor than survive with shame.

Is it possible that the manifestation of such a spirit is necessarily confined to the scenes of war? Is a nation's honor at stake only in times of imminent peril? I crave for every one of you a like spirit of consecration for the tasks of peace. Forget yourself as an individual, be willing to lose yourself in the mass, work in it and through it for

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

the integrity of the whole. No nation has ever been conquered by a foe from without unless there has been developed some inherent weakness within. If we can withstand the dangers of peace we need never fear the danger of war. You too will soon be up against great things; therefore be of good courage and play the men for your people. To be of service in pursuing the offices of peace requires a peculiar courage and manly spirit. In peace your duty will not come to you as it does when there is a call to arms with the enemy already crossing your country's frontier. You must go forth to meet it. You must either discover your duty or else create it, and then swear allegiance in your own name to its high behests. Centuries ago the knight errant rode forth on the adventure of service, to champion the cause of the weak and the wronged wherever they might be found.



## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

For him there was no clear call to any definite undertaking. But, compelled by the knightly spirit, he resolutely set himself to seek the undiscovered duty somewhere beyond the far horizon. There is no place in our modern days for this type of noble adventurer. He has disappeared with the conditions and opportunities of the age in which he flourished. But the same spirit may reappear in another form, to meet the needs of another age, again

“To serve as model for the mighty world  
And be the fair beginning of a time.”

It may be regarded by some as the expression of a too extravagant optimism if we declare our belief that the world is entering upon a new time in its history, a new order of things, in which the law of justice and the spirit of mercy will universally prevail. The very darkness, however, of the present time creates

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

a persistent belief that there must be some brighter light ahead. No robust spirit can be permanently pessimistic. You are called to play a part in the building of a new world. Such a vocation is your inspiration.

Moreover, he who has felt within him the compulsion of a commanding cause is led instinctively to recognize the fact that the sacrifices of duty thus self-imposed are an offering on the high altar of the eternal God. Patriotism in war is usually crowned with religious zeal and enthusiasm, sometimes with reason, sometimes without. The spiritual impulse is elemental; great occasions always tend to revive it. Shall not the patriotism of peace also realize that the better order of things for which it strives is in some manner identified with the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth? There are some who, all too readily discouraged, complain bitterly that the pres-

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

ent European tragedy proves Christianity a failure. On the contrary, I believe that Christianity is approaching its supreme test. It rests with the coming generation, to which you belong, to restore to the law and love of Christ its ancient power. The will to believe is sufficient to carry the strongly intrenched height in the face of the enemy's fire. The will to believe is powerful also to cause the kingdom of God and his Christ to prevail against the evil of the world, "against the principalities, against the powers, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

I am told that several years before the present war there was formed in France a league of young men for the purpose of the moral and spiritual regeneration of the youth of their country and the consequent development of a nobler type of manhood. They called themselves the Young France. I would

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

that you, in the vigor of your enthusiasm and ambition, might emulate this splendid enterprise, and endeavor through the consecrated spirit of a Young America to bring a new promise and a new hope to your native land, and through your land to the whole earth.

This year of your graduation, 1915, will prove a memorable year in the world's history, a year of war and disaster whose dark shadows have fallen upon the whole earth. This year must be redeemed by the labors of the years immediately to follow, your working years, the years of your opportunity, which will call for extraordinary men to meet the exigencies of extraordinary times, strong men to undertake the difficult task, to bear the heavy burden, to pursue the hazardous enterprise—men of conviction and of courage, capable of forgetting their own interests in following the sovereign call of duty. One of the most pitiful

## MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE

characters described in the range of fiction is that of "the man without a country." Equally pitiful, it seems to me, in this day of the world's need, is the man without a cause, a cause to serve, to maintain and defend even to the sacrificing of one's own life. The greatest misfortune that can possibly overtake you is to follow the fashion prevailing in some quarters to-day of repressing all enthusiasm, and from a detached point of view to regard with cold indifference the labor and struggle of your brother men.

I refuse to entertain the idea even as a possibility that any life before me is going to waste, self-centred, self-indulgent, and self-destroying. For every one of you I hope and pray there may come, in the closing hours of your university career, some mighty inspiration of a holy cause, some vision, indistinct, far away, it may be, of the Holy Grail for you to

MARTIAL VALOR IN TIMES OF PEACE  
seek and for you to find. It is my earnest wish for you all that you may attain an abundant measure of success in the life before you, but I would remind you that the secret of success may be found in the words of the blameless knight, Sir Galahad, as he started upon the holy mission of his adventurous career:

“If I lose myself, I save myself.”













